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WORLD • FASHION

Why The Hermès Birkin Bag is a Better Investment Than Gold



A employee holds a \$129,000 crocodile Hermès Birkin Bag during a private opening for the new Hermès store on Wall Street in New York June 21, 2007. Timothy A. Clary—AFP/Getty Images

The New York Times

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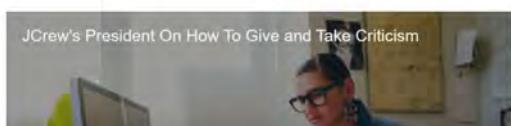
BY TARA JOHN JANUARY 15, 2016 8:38 AM EST

Skip the gold and steer away from the tumbling stock market, according to a new study the best option for long-term investors is to buy a Hermès Birkin bag.

According to Baghunter, an online marketplace for buying and selling handbags, the Birkin bag outpaced both the S&P 500 and the price of gold in the last 35 years—a time period chosen to reflect the date when Birkin bags were first produced in 1981. They say that the annual return on a Birkin was 14.2%, compared to the S&P average of 8.7% a year and gold's -1.5%.



The bags, which cost anywhere between \$60,000 to \$200,000, are made in limited numbers and are not advertised. Quartz attributes its astronomical prices to scarcity: waiting lists for new bags are six years.



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According to Baghunter: "As a status symbol for the elite and ultra-rich, the main factor affecting the secondary market for Birkins is desire. All signs point to that desire remaining as strong throughout 2016 as it has been since the bag was released in 1985, with media outlets fawning over celebrities such as Kim Kardashian and Victoria Beckham who regularly sport their Birkin bags in paparazzi pictures."

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BY THE NEW YORK TIMES

The bag was conceived when actress Jane Birkin was on the same flight as Hermès' boss Jean-Louis Dumas and complained about not being able to find a good leather weekend bag.

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Is the Hermès Birkin a form of investment?

Last update: 29/11/2021



In thirty years, the Birkin bag has gone from a pleasure purchase to a very popular investment photo credit: Gettyimages

In 2016, the highly reputable Time Magazine headlined that the Hermès Birkin bag was a better investment than gold. The handbag signed by the luxury house records record after record in auctions at hundreds of thousands of euros. Where does the craze for this handbag come from and, above all, to what extent can it be considered a serious investment rather than a pleasure purchase? Here are some price tips on how to get one.

Summary:

- A high value fashion item
- The price of a Birkin
- A rare object, therefore precious
- A reputation built without advertising
- From pleasure purchase to investment
- Invest in a Birkin from Hermès
- Buy a new Birkin
- Buy a used Birkin

A high value fashion item

Hermès is a family business created in 1837. In the beginning, its founder Thierry Hermès produced horse riding equipment. It was not until 1922 that the Hermès brand produced its first leather handbag. It is the English actress and singer Jane Birkin who inspires the bag and gives it her name. The Birkin quickly becomes a fashion icon whose value continues to grow. In 30 years, the value of the Birkin has appreciated by 500%.

The price of a Birkin

In stores, the classic simple leather model costs around 8,000 euros. On the Collector Square site, the cheapest Birkin bag is displayed at 6,980 euros and the most expensive at no less than 55,000 euros... The average is around 17,000 euros. The price varies considerably depending on the models, the type of leather (crocodile, lizard, goat, ostrich), the format, the materials in which the buckles, padlocks and keys are made (gold or silver plated). Bespoke models can even be set with diamonds. The most expensive bag in the world is indeed a Birkin.

The Birkin Himalaya 35 is the most expensive handbag in the world

The most expensive Birkin in the world is the Himalaya 35 model. It costs the modest sum of 432,000 dollars, the price of an apartment in Paris. This handbag is the rarest in the world. It is made from crocodile skin and colored to evoke the Himalayan mountains using a unique, time-consuming technique. It was given to influencer Nabilla as a birthday present on her 28th birthday. The bag is set with white gold and 200 diamonds. Its padlock is made entirely of gold and diamonds. The Hermès house only produces one or two each year.

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It takes two days on average to produce a Birkin. However, this model is only manufactured in ever smaller quantities by the Hermès house, while demand continues to increase. The waiting lists for a bag are counted in years. The rarity of the product is therefore a fully assumed marketing choice. Its effects on the value of an ever more expensive, ever more exclusive accessory are undeniable today.

A reputation built without advertising

Hermès does not advertise its Birkin bags. With up to six years on the waiting list, there are many women who, once the Grail has been obtained, proclaim it loud and clear. Celebrities are the first to highlight their Birkin, from Kate Moss to Mariah Carey via Victoria Beckham, Kylie Jenner or Cardi B, making it a symbol of opulence and style. Unsurprisingly, the Hermès Birkin is the most Instagrammed bag in history, with over 5.6 million posts on the platform.

From pleasure purchase to investment

Investir dans un sac à main ne relevait pas exactement de l'évidence jusqu'à il y a quelques années, les accessoires de mode de luxe étant considérés davantage comme un achat plaisir. En 2019, le bureau de conseil Knight Frank a inclus le sac Birkin d'Hermès dans son Index de l'Investissement dans l'art et les objets de luxe (KFLII) en mettant en avant son taux de rendement de 17% qui surpasse d'autres formes plus classiques d'investissement. Désormais, nul doute que le statut du Birkin en particulier (et celui d'autres sacs à main de grandes marques dans une moindre mesure) fait partie du portfolio d'investissement.

INVEST IN A BIRKIN FROM HERMÈS

Convinced to take the leap? To help you, here are some tips to put the odds on your side. A Birkin bag in which you place your money must be insured: in case of flood, fire, theft, it is a really necessary precaution. In order for this accessory to keep its value (and to gain value over time), it is necessary to keep it in perfect condition. If you plan to resell it to get your return on investment, that even means not using it.

Buy a new Birkin

This is probably the hardest way to get your hands on a Birkin, but it's still the classic route: buying it in a Hermès boutique. Some people get it right the first time. Everything rests on the sales assistant or sales consultant. Get closer to a Hermès boutique and a sales consultant with whom you will need to build a relationship of trust and explain, patiently, that you dream of a Birkin. Weekends and school vacation periods should be avoided to optimize your chances of having a good contact likely to lead you to the Grail.

Buy a used Birkin

On the Internet there are many dealers and Birkin waiting for buyers. Only resellers able to guarantee the authenticity of the product should be retained, in particular Vestiaire Collective, Collector Square, Resee, The Real Real, to avoid spending a fortune on a fake Hermès... It is essential to buy your Birkin from a reputable retailer, given the exponential number of counterfeits.

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